



NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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2019 Contract Update #3

Bargaining's First Two Weeks

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You are reading the third Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2019 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers throughout the country informed about the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

Bargaining is underway—at the time of this writing, the NPMHU has presented about half of its proposals, covering more than 40 pages of new or revised contract language, during Main Table meetings with the Postal Service. The Postal Service has stated they do not expect to introduce proposals of their own until later.

During July and August, the Union will continue meeting with postal management representatives several days per week. Some of these meetings are on-the-record, called “main Table” meetings, while others take place off the record in the form of smaller, informal subcommittees where focused discussions can be held at length. Subcommittees which have formed thus far focus on expanding coverage under Article 2, making adjustments to Article 8 on overtime, dealing with various issues concerning Mail Handler Assistants, and subcontracting as authorized under Article 32. Articles 12 and 15 also have warranted early-formed subcommittees, especially as Article 12 outlines the complexities of seniority, bidding, and reassignments, and Article 15 forms the foundation of our grievance and arbitration rights. Our intention in forming these subcommittees is to allow for open and frank discussions while upholding those aspects of the National Agreement that the NPMHU believes are most critical. There will certainly be other subcommittees formed as we progress through the remainder of both parties' proposed changes.

Throughout this round's on-the-record meetings, President Hogrogian has outlined the non-economic demands of the unit clearly and repeatedly. The NPMHU proposals this year relate to most of the Articles and Memoranda contained throughout the National Agreement. Piece-by-piece, the Union aims to improve protection for all our current members and the fruits of their labor. In the last round of

bargaining in 2016, the Union presented over 100 proposals. This round, the National Office is honing its efforts on a smaller number of total proposals so that we can perfect those which are most urgent. Many things have changed in three years, and we are both reflecting and looking ahead in our decisionmaking to protect and enhance the benefits that the Mail Handler workforce needs.

Ultimately, the NPMHU cannot know with precise certainty what will happen before the next round of contract renewal that is years away. The amendments we seek would increase the Union's flexibility to weather any change.

Bargaining: What Happens in a Week?

The bargaining schedule is made up of formal, on-the-record meetings and less formal, off-the-record meetings. Main Table sessions are where all proposals are officially introduced by each party—under the ground rules for negotiations, no proposal can be considered until it has been presented to both sides in this formal setting. Meanwhile, subcommittees have been created—by mutual agreement—to address specific concerns more extensively.

In every round of bargaining, the smallest subcommittee group is focused on editing any cosmetic issues in the contract, such as amending typographical errors and ensuring that dates are updated to reflect the new contract cycle. The goal is to ensure that our National Agreement is as clear as possible for years to come. We will update you on subcommittee developments as bargaining progresses.

Altogether, even when meetings are scheduled two-to-four days a week, the negotiations schedule becomes a full-time endeavor. In addition to Main Tables and subcommittees, members of the NPMHU's Contract Administration Department and legal team are collaborating and meeting continuously to draft and revise proposals, to research facts and arguments, and to ensure an efficient and productive bargaining process.

Continue to watch your bulletin boards and National website for the latest information.

PLEASE POST!!

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